The Passing Lane

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The CRIS Update Update

As mentioned in the last Passing Lane (and we know you didn't miss that!) CRAB has been in full swing, updating CRIS to the newest and last version of DOS AREV 3.12. As promised, we have begun the task of upgrading your sites and have hit the road with AREV 3.12. The process has been educational and we have been working closely with each county in every step of this conversion.

To date, we have upgraded around 25% of the County CRIS users. For those counties that have been involved to date, we really appreciate all of your help in getting you back up to speed.

We think you will be pleased with the newest version of AREV and are continuing to schedule county visits as each upgrade moves along. Although we prefer on-site visits, which are lasting 1-2 days, we know some of you just can't wait! So here's the offer: If you can live without your CRIS for a few days, we can upgrade your CRIS here at the CRAB. You send us your AREV and CRIS and we'll update it here and send it back!

If this idea appeals to you give Dr John a call on the CRIS line at (360) 664-CRIS.

CRIS Classes in Eastern Washington!!

You heard it right! CRAB is presenting the CRIS series of classes in Colfax, graciously hosted by Whitman county. Those of you in eastern Washington who may have missed coming to Olympia - give us a call!! Check the Training schedule in this edition and sign up today!! Classes offered will be Introduction to CRIS, CRIS Reporting Workshop and Introduction to the County Pavement Management System. If any county would like to see something else offered while we are there - call Melanie Deam today on the CRIS line and we will try to accomodate you.

CEAL still packs them in

There's still lots of interest from many of our customers in the CEAL program, as witnessed by our healthy turnout from Mason, Kitsap, Ferry, and Chelan counties at this past weeks CEAL series. Apologies to Bill Bullock of Mason County, that barking and ball tricks were not covered, as these are advanced topics.

🦀World Wide Web Workshop

Our last issue highlighted the kickoff of our site on the world wide web (*www.crab.wa.gov*). Currently our site has close to 500 hits (requests from remote computers) a day and we have had close to 1000 individual users. Just a droplet in the bucket compared to the rest of the internet world, but we are starting to have an impact. Clark and Snohomish counties are both making creative use of our web server and others have been showing interest in taking advantage of this free service.

Tuesday, February 20th we will conduct an **HTML Workshop** (or How to Create Documents that can be Displayed on the World Wide Web Workshop). If you have any interest in creating a presence on the internet this one day course is for you. HTML is very easy to learn so this promises to be a fun day. Bring some ideas (a little net surfing experience is helpful but not required). Bring some content (a brochure, directory of services, picture of your dog, etc.). And bring your enthusiasm (hey, its not always sunny in Olympia). Sign up today, before we run out of space.
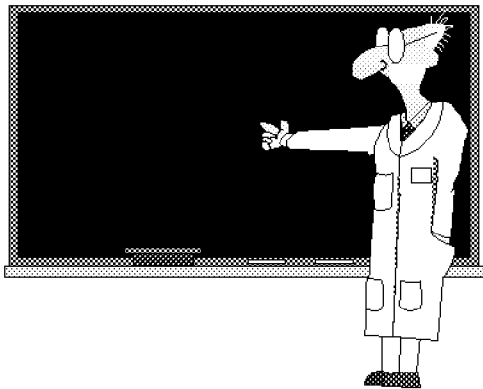
🦀WIN95 and CRAB software

Microsoft Windows 95 has solved many problems for the CRIS user, namely in the memory arena by loading network and mouse drivers in areas other than conventional memory. Windows95 also allows easy access to Expanded Memory (EMS) that CRIS needs. As an example, here at CRAB with Windows95 we are able to run on an ethernet network with Novell Netware, Microsoft networks (peer to peer), and TCP/IP all at the same time and still have 604K of conventional memory and 4Megs of EMS for CRIS!! Everyone here at CRAB has been very pleased with Windows95. See related WIN95 information in the Eagle Point Insert.
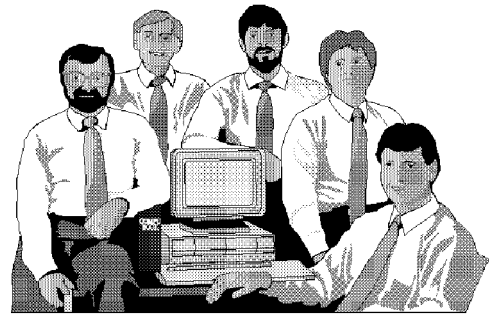
🦀Information Technology Training

CRAB continues with FREE training sessions in its primary software support functions, County Road Information System (CRIS), EaglePoint Fundamentals and Civil Engineering Automation Library (CEAL). Here's the latest schedule:

January:

◇ 29-3/1 Eagle Point Fundamentals

February:

◇ 13-16 Eagle Point Fundamentals
◇ 20   HTML Workshop NEW!!!! (See Left)
◇ 21   CRIS Maintenance Management System
◇ 22, 23 Intro to the County Pavement Management Planning System
◇ 26-29 Colfax Design Workshop (Eagle Point Fundamentals)

March

◇ 4-8   Colfax CRIS Series (includes Intro/Reporting/CPMPS)
◇ 19-22 Eagle Point Fundamentals
◇ 25   Introduction to CRIS
◇ 26, 27 CRIS Reporting Workshop
◇ 28, 29 Intro to the County Pavement Management Planning System

Call today to reserve your spot in our *FREE* courses. Refreshers are always welcome too!

REGISTER HERE

Eagle Point introduction at the counties.

Eagle Point Advantage Series, a set of civil engineering design programs which run inside Autocad, were distributed to all of those counties who expressed interest (and that means most of you) in December. In all, we will ship 163 licenses for various program versions, including Autocad R12 and R13 for DOS and Windows, and Microstation. All Microstation licenses were backordered until mid January so that the shipment would coincide with Eagle Point's latest version on that platform (Sorry about that Franklin).

CRAB has been agressive in offering free training on this system to any county employees on a first come, first served basis. We've welcomed professionals from many counties, including Adams, Grays Harbor, Lewis, and Skagit. We have also supplemented our regular menu of bi-weekly sessions with custom classes for larger counties at their site. This is similar to our Colfax workshop, where we take the training to you. King amd Thurston counties have benefitted from this already, and we look forward to catching Clark, Skagit, Whatcom, as well as some of their neighbors in the coming weeks.

If you couldn't get into the Eagle Point Workshop when you called, and you're still interested, be sure and call the Eagle Point hotline so that we can keep your name warm on the waiting list. There are no waiting lists for our April classes at our time of publication. (Hotline (360) 664-BEAK).
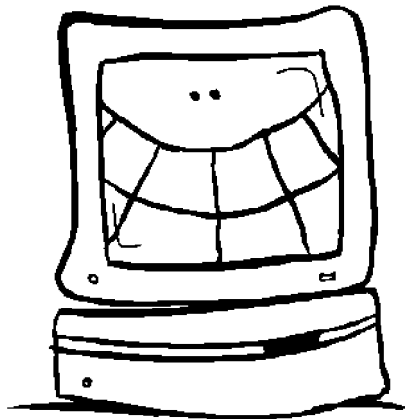
CRAB is finally wired

If you have email capabilities you can now communicate with EVERYONE at CRAB without getting put on hold. It is pretty easy to figure out a CRAB employee's email address but we will lay it all out here anyway. Each of us has a private mailbox with an address *firstname*@**crab.wa.gov**. So our fearless leader, Eric Berger's address is **eric@crab.wa.gov**. Easy enough eh? And most of us have very easy to spell first names. So hurry over to your nearest email enabled computer and pound out a letter to Karen, Tracy, Sharon, Toni, Eric, Reid, Jay, Randy, Al, Dave, Gene, Steve, John, Melanie, DrJohn, or Sam. So who is this DrJohn character? Well, that would be Dr. John McEachron. Every rule has to have an exception, sorry.
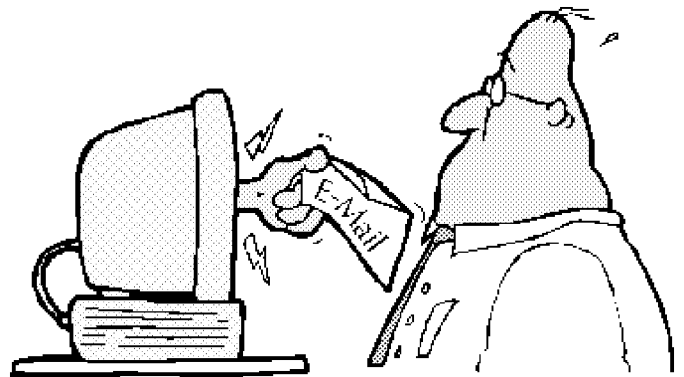
NEW Internet News Server!!

CRAB has recently set up a news server!! This is exciting stuff. If you have questions or perhaps want to initiate a technical discussion among your peers - here is one forum you might use. A news server is an internet application where you may post articles, questions and comments and have anyone who also accesses the news, reply, query and comment you in return! You can also post your questions and comments on the server and build our mutual understanding of Eagle Point, CEAL, and CRIS.

To access the CRAB newserver, point your newsreader software to *percival.crab.wa.gov* and subscribe today! Call us if you'd like more information.

🦀 We've all been there...

Once upon a midnight dreary, fingers cramped and vision bleary, System manuals piled high and wasted paper on the floor,   Longing for the warmth of bed-sheets, Still I sat there, doing spreadsheets:

Having reached the bottom line,
I took a floppy from the drawer.
Typing with a steady hand,
I then invoked the SAVE command
But got instead a reprimand:
it read "Abort, Retry, Ignore".

Was this some occult illusion? Some maniacal intrusion?
These were choices Solomon himself had never faced before.
Carefully, I weighed my options.
These three seemed to be the top ones.
Clearly, I must now adopt one -
Choose: "Abort, Retry, Ignore".

With my fingers pale and trembling,
Slowly toward the keyboard bending,
Longing for a happy ending, hoping all would be restored,
Praying for some guarantee Finally I pressed a key --
But on the screen what did I see?
Again: "Abort, Retry, Ignore".

I tried to catch the chips off guard --
I pressed again, but twice as hard.
Luck was just not in the cards, I saw what I had seen before.
Now I typed in desperation, Trying random combinations.
Still there came the incantation -
Choose: "Abort, Retry, Ignore".

There I sat, distraught, exhausted,
by my own machine accosted;
Getting up, I turned away and paced across the office floor.
And then I saw an awful sight,
A bold and blinding flash of light, A lightning bolt that cut the night and shook me to my very core.
The PC screen collapsed and died,
"Oh no!-- my database", I cried.
I thought I heard a voice reply,
"You'll see your data-- Nevermore!"

To this day I do not know The place to which our data goes,
Perhaps it goes to Heaven where the angels have it stored.
But as for productivity - well,
I fear it has gone straight to H*ll.
And that's the tale I have to tell -
Your choice: "Abort, Retry, Ignore".

(*anonymous*)

COUNTY ROAD ADMINISTRATION BOARD
2404 CHANDLER COURT
OLYMPIA WA 98504-0913
(206)753-5989 SCAN 234-5989

✦ Eagle Point tips and tricks

The following bits of wisdom have come up on CRAB radar over the past month or so.   We have also posted this stuff on the internet on our exclusive new server called *percival.crab.wa.gov*. (See related article).

- **EAGLE POINT DISK SPACE**

Contrary to what the installation manual says . . expect to use about 60MB of free disk space when you install the full complement of Eagle Point modules that comes with the CRAB license.

- **OTHER VENDOR DATA TRANSLATION TO EAGLE POINT**

The question came up about how to deliver a TIN from a Softdesk client.

Eagle Point cannot read or translate the proprietary TIN data from the Softdesk project. However, Eagle Point can make a TIN from entitiies in the Autocad drawing if those entities are either 3D lines or 3D polylines (we don't find much success with 3D faces or 3D polyfaces). Ask your Softdesk client (or anyone who can deliver an Autocad drawing of a TIN) to make a drawing representation of the TIN they want to deliver (note that identical lines may lie on top of one another). Then isolate this drawing layer such that all you see on the screen are the representative triangles. Then tell Eagle Point:

Surface Modeling/Triangulate/MakeTIN

If you have the *Import TIN* toggle swithched on when you press OK, you should see the resulting 3dfaces imported by Eagle Point correspond exactly to the linework represented by the original TIN.

If all your client can provide is 3D polyfaces (attention CEAL/CECAD people), CRAB has developed a crude DOS utilitt which translates a DXF file of 3D polyfaces into a DXF of 3dpolys. WA Counties can phone (360)664-BEAK for more info.

- **USING TABLETS, ACAD, EAGLE POINT, AND OTHER VENDORS PRODUCTS**

The Eagle Point .mnu file takes over definition of tablet area 1. If you are using another application that wants this area, you'll have to edit the .mnu file to delete the EP definitions for that area.

Thanks to Mike at Thurston County

- **EAGLE POINT VER 13, ACAD R13 WINDOWS, AND MS WINDOWS 3.1**

Many counties ordered Eagle Point ver 13 for ACAD WIN 13. Some are running this arrangement fine under WIN 3.1. Others are reporting sporadic problems and some blame may be placed on the limitations and quirks of Windows 3.1.Some would like to switch toWin 95 or Win NT.

ACAD R13 Windows does not 100% support Win 95 yet. R13 c4 for Windows solves that and will be available in Jan 96. Eagle Point will release a patch for its R13 Win customers (including CRAB) at the same time. This should solve Win 3.1 stability problems.

Win NT is a solution right now, but you need to buy it (it cost more thanWin 95), and you need to get a patch from Eagle Point. Let John Donaue know (WA counties only) if you're interested in pursuing this route. In the meantime, if your a WA county and you own EP R13 Win and would like to move to something more stable, contact John Donahue for a copy of EP R13 DOS. Its very stable and you can load ACAD R13 DOS from the same CD you got for the Windows version. Eagle Point has agreed with this arrangement given the chaos surrounding Autocad 13 and Microsoft operating systems at this time.

✈ *Eagle Point tips and tricks*

- **EMS MEMORY FOR SDMS EDITOR**

The very handy SDMS field book editor converts data collection files into a standardized format for editing. It requires "Expanded" memory to run. This is old DOS stuff. Its can be arranged by EMM386.EXE using the RAM ON switch. See the COGO manual page 1-3 for more information.

Thanks to Phyllis Kanyer, Kitsap County

- **EXTRA DESCRIPTIONS ON FIELD CODES**

You can enter an extra string of descriptive text when collecting data in the field by entering a space after the required field code and then typing stuff in. To see this extra stuff in your drawing, be sure and assign a Node Attribute Style to that field code which enables description display (EP command Symbols/Nodes).

See Data Collection manual page 2-2.
Thanks to Doug Grimm at Pend Oreille County

- **ERROR Report**

* * * * ACAD ERROR !sequence error reading inital allocation list * * * *

This error came up after installing ACAD R13 DOS into an existing ACAD R13 Win installation. The solution was to do a fresh install of ACAD R13 DOS in an entirely different area, forcing fresh installation of the COM directory. Its unclear whether a fresh installation of everything, DOS and

Windows, might have also worked.

Thanks to Rod Lakey - Lewis County

- **COPYING THE EAGLE POINT DIRECTORY**

You can copy EP across your network to other machines (within the limits of your license of course) by duplicating the directory. For example :

XCOPY c:\ep*.* h:\transfer\ep*.* /s

Where /s tells XCOPY to copy all subdirectories. The thing you need to verify on the target machines is that EAGLE.BAT points to the correct ACAD directories. Check this out before trying to run it.

- **NODE TRANSLATION FROM SOFTDESK DRAWINGS.**

Node is Eaglespeak for attributes COGO points. It appears that Softdesk drawings commonly contain Autocad blocks containing attributes about point number, point eleveation, and point description. We are currently testing a utility for translating a DXF of a Softdesk drawing containing COGO nodes into an Eagle Point data collection file. Once translated, the data collection file provides field code for each point corresponding to the layer name of Softdesk insertion, and a point description corresponding to the actual Softdesk description. When using Eagle Point Data Collection, turn off the linework under the Optios button, and make a Nodes library referring to the layer names as the description, remembering to switch off the *append field code to description* toggle to prevent echoing the layer name in the description attribute.

To run this utility, you need to export the drawing to DXF, and you need to know the layer names in yuor Softdesk drawing for the point number, elevations, and description attributes on the nodes. Washington counties can obtain a test copy of the utility in exchange for comments about its successes and failures by calling the Eagle Point hotline at **(360) 664-BEAK.**